

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 7765

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, VI, US, UNGA
SUBJECT: OBASANJO'S VISIT TO US IN OCTOBER

REF: LAGOS 7723, LAGOS 7617

1. DURING TOUR D'HORIZON THIS MORNING WITH GARBA AND OTHERS AT MEA, I OBTAINED DEFINITIVE CONFIRMATION OF THE HEAD OF STATE'S ACCEPTANCE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S INVITATION. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED AS FOLLOWS:
A. APPROXIMATE BEST TIMING FOR THE VISIT FROM FMG POINT OF VIEW IS THE PERIOD OCTOBER 5 - OCTOBER 13. OBASANJO IS OBLIGED TO BE IN LAGOS FOR NIGERIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY OCTOBER 1 AND FOR THE OPENING OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHICH IS TENTATIVELY EXPECTED AROUND OCTOBER 3. OBASANJO WISHES TO ADDRESS THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUT HESITATES FIX A DATE UNTIL WASHINGTON PORTION OF US STAY IS SCHEDULED. GARBA IS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS THE UNGA ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6. HE SAYS HE COULD GIVE THIS BOOKING TO OBASANJO IF NECESSARY AND USEFUL, BUT THE WASHINGTON VISIT HAS PRIORITY ON OBASANJO'S AGENDA.
B. THE FMG WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW "A DRAFT ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM" FOR THE WASHINGTON VISIT. THEY ARE THINKING IN TERMS OF TWO DAYS IN WASHINGTON. THEY HAD NOT ENVISAGED ANY PARTICULAR PROGRAM FOR NEW YORK CITY BUT I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED IF WE COULD SUGGEST SEVERAL
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NEW YORK CITY EVENTS THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER MUTUALLY USEFUL. GARBA SAID THE FMG "WANTED THE VISIT TO BE MORE POLITICAL THAN ECONOMIC." I WAS UNABLE TO EXPLORE IN ANY DETAIL WHAT HE MEANT, BUT PRESUME THERE IS NO INTEREST IN VISITING THE TVA, SATELLITE LAUNCHING BASES, METROPOLITAN PLANNING INSTITUTIONS, PORT AUTHORITIES, ETC. IN FACT, I DOUBT THERE IS INTEREST IN VISITING ANY CITIES ADDITIONAL TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, BUT

THIS MERITS FURTHER EXPLORATION.

C. APPROXIMATE SIZE OF OBASANJO'S PARTY IS EXPECTED TO BE FORTY RPT FORTY. THERE IS AS YET NO IDENTIFICATION OF MEMBERS OF THE PARTY OTHER THAN "SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, ETC."
D. GARBA WILL REACH NEW YORK SEVERAL DAYS IN ADVANCE OF OBASANJO.

2. IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IF EMBASSY COULD PASS TO MEA SAMPLE SCHEDULES OF ACTIVITIES OF RECENT HEAD OF STATE VISITS TO US. MEA WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW THE SORTS OF FUNCTIONS, SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS, PRESS APPEARANCES, SUBSTANTIVE WORKING SESSIONS, ETC. AS ARRANGED FOR RECENT STATE VISITS. IN EVENT OF TRAVEL OUTSIDE WASHINGTON WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE OFFICIAL VISIT, WHO PAYS?

3. WE DID NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK THIS MORNING ABOUT TIMING OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISIT, BUT I SURMISE FMG NOT RPT NOT KEEN ON EARLY PUBLICITY.
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